FOUR

COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSES:

BY

REV. LEONARD BACON, D. D.,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN NEW HAVEN;

TOGETHER WITH

Extracts from the Records of the Church and Society.

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FOUR

COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSES:

DELIVERED

ON HIS SIXTY-THIRD BIRTH-DAY,

FEBRUARY 19th, 1865;

On the Fortieth Anniversary of his Installation,

MARCH 12th, 1865;

AND ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM PASTORAL DUTIES,

SEPTEMBER 9th, 1866;

BY

REV. LEONARD BACON, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN NEW HAVEN;

TOGETHER WITH

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY AND FIRST CHURCH, RESPECTING REV. DR. BACON'S RETIREMENT FROM THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

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NEW HAVEN:
T. J. STAFFORD, PRINTER, 235 STATE STREET.

1866.

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New Haven, Sept. 10th, 1866.

Rev. Dr. Bacon,

Dear Sir:—Regarding the four discourses delivered by you in the First Church, on your sixty-third birth-day, on the fortieth anniversary of your settlement as Pastor of the First Church and Society, and on your retirement from pastoral duties, together with the action of the Society occasioned by the third of these discourses, your letter of resignation, and the action of the Society and the Church thereupon, as documents of historical interest to us and those who shall come after us, which ought to be preserved in a printed form, besides the nearer interest given to them by the attachment of your late parishioners to yourself—we would ask the favor of you to allow us to have copies of these discourses with a view to their being published with the above mentioned proceedings.

Yours, with respect and affection,

Henry White,
Hervey Sanford,
Henry Trowbridge,
Edward E. Salisbury,
J. P. Dickerman,
H. C. Kingsley,
Ezra C. Read,
Thos. R. Trowbridge,
Amos F. Barnes,
Lucius Hotchkiss,
Nath'l A. Bacon,
Jas. M. Townsend,
Alex. C. Twining,
D. W. Lathrop,
Thomas B. Osborne,
Samuel Noyes,
F. S. Parker,
Eli W. Blake,
Chauncey Goodrich,
Leonard Bradley,
Charles Robinson,
Alfred Walker,
James Walker,
Leon'd J. Sanford,
C. S. Lyman,
Henry Peck,
C. B. Whittlesey,
Eli Whitney,
Richard C. Morse,
Leonard Winship.
Charles Thompson,
H. T. Blake,
A. D. Osborne.

New Haven, Nov. 15th, 1866.

My Dear Friends:

I trust that the kindness which prompted your request for copies of certain discourses which you propose to include in a memorial publication, will pardon my lack of promptness in complying with that request. The new duties which I have assumed leave me, just now, very little leisure for making out copies of discourses which were imperfectly written, and one of which, especially, could be reproduced only from memory, aided by a few notes. But now, at last, I am able to place the completed manuscripts at your disposal.

As the latest of these discourses was written and delivered without any definite recollection of what I had said in the anniversary discourses, eighteen months before, something like repetition may appear in the reading of it. If so, you will excuse the repetition, I am sure.

With unaffected gratitude for all your kindness toward me and mine, through all the years in which I have been permitted to serve you as your pastor, and with prayer that I may yet see the venerable Church prospering and flourishing under another pastor, I am still

Truly yours,

LEONARD BACON.

Henry White, Esq.,
Hervey Sanford, Esq.,
Edward E. Salisbury, Esq.,
and others.

DISCOURSE I.

THE MEASURE OF OUR DAYS.

PREACHED FEB. 19, 1865.

PSALM xxxix. 4, 5.—Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

IN another Psalm, "the measure of our days" is more definitely spoken of:—"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Some men, having an extraordinary tenacity of life, live on till they have completed eighty years, or even more, under an ever accumulating burthen of infirmities; but they are only the exceptions that prove the rule. Seventy years is the ordinary or normal duration of a completed human life. Most persons, of course, die much younger, but of them we say that they die before their time.

Long ago it was thought that the seventy years length of human life is divided naturally into terms or sections of seven years each. Perhaps the thought is not altogether fanciful. If we allow the first seven years of life to infancy, and the second to childhood, the third completes that part of

human life which may be called the time of preparation for the full responsibilities of manhood in society. At the age of twenty-one, the youth is regarded as having become a man capable of performing all the duties of citizenship. Seven years later—at twenty-eight—he is no longer a young man. Add seven years more, and he has already reached the noon of life—half way from the cradle to the grave. For the last seven years he has been in the full maturity and vigor of his powers, and through two more of these weeks of years—if he escapes disease and serious accident—his bodily strength, as well as the force of his mind, remains undiminished. But when he has completed the seventh of the septennial periods, and enters on his fiftieth year of life, he finds that his day has begun to decline. He is not yet in his old age, but he begins to find that the large majority of men in active life are younger than himself. He can do as much work as ever, and perhaps can do it quite as well as ever; but gray hairs are on him here and there, and he knows it; his face is marked with deeper furrows; his complexion has lost all the tints of youth; his sight grows dim, and needs some artificial aid. Gradually but steadily, through twice seven years, the change is going on. His mind may be as active as ever, the faculty of judgment and foresight, trained by long experience, may be wiser, and more to be relied on than ever; but he begins to find (and every year the discovery is more complete), that he can endure less of hardship, and that he is more liable to infirmity. Thus he comes to the end of the ninth septennial period. He has completed sixty-three years of life; and there remain before him only seven short years—very short indeed—to complete the "threescore years and ten." Henceforth he is an old man, growing older every day. What remains of life to him, is like the sunset of our northern climate—twilight slowly fading into darkness.

Just at this point I am standing to-day; for to-day I enter on the last seven years of the "threescore years and ten." I remember how singular the impression was when I first heard the expression from a father in the ministry, about thirty years ago, that he "thought he had about ten years work left in him." He was sixty years old, and his constitution was unbroken;

and he thought he might live on, and work on, about ten years. Accustomed as I then was to think more of the uncertainty of mortal life than of its certain limit, I was startled by the definiteness of the calculation. But now for some time past, I have been learning to calculate my own future with the same definiteness. The element of uncertainty remains, but the element of certainty is constantly becoming more predominant in all such calculations. I know not what a day may bring forth; but I know the measure of my days, that the days of our years are threescore years and ten, and I know that, of that measure, only seven short years remain to me. I know that those seven years will be years of decadence and decay—that every one of them will tell upon my mortal frame, that every one of them will press me forward to the front rank of old men who have out-lived their generation.

Meeting you, my friends, in the house of God to-day, and standing before you to speak and to teach in Christ's name, I propose simply to present to you some of the views which impress me as I look upon life from my present position. Postponing the review of my ministry in the pastoral office to a more appropriate occasion, and preferring to say as little as possible about myself, I only intend to show you, if I can, how this life which we are now living, seems to one who finds that he has so nearly completed the measure of his days.

I. First of all I am impressed with this: THE MEASURE OF OUR DAYS ON EARTH IS ALTOGETHER INADEQUATE TO THE MEASURE OF OUR CAPABILITY AS INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL BEINGS. When we know most thoroughly how frail we are, and realize most clearly that God has made our days as a hand-breadth, and that our age is as nothing before him; then it is that we feel most deeply the disproportion between the narrow measure of our days and the boundless development and progress of which our higher nature is capable. How much more might we do—how much higher might we ascend in knowledge and wisdom, and in likeness to God—if life were not so short? For example, I have been learning from the Scriptures, first as a child, then as a man, and then as a minister of the word, more than fifty years; and yet it seems to me that now I am only beginning

to appreciate the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and to apprehend the evidences of God's love, which are brought to us in that holy book. So through all these years I have been learning—as my busy life has yielded opportunities—something about God's works in nature, and his providence unfolding into history, but I am only beginning to know what I might know. I know more now than I knew a year ago. I hope to know more next year than I know now. I hope to go on learning, year after year, till sight shall fade from my eyes, and the worn-out brain shall cease to serve me. But, oh, how much more might I learn if I could have another term of threescore years and ten! From my childhood I have been learning also, under God's gracious teaching (though, alas! inaptly and slowly,) the great life-lesson of confidence in God, of satisfaction in his will, of fellowship with his abhorrence of wrong, and of free coöperation with his love. Is all my possibility of progress in this respect shut up within the narrow measure of my mortal days?

I have no hesitation, then, in saying that, in proportion as God makes us to know our end, and the measure of our days what it is, that we may know how frail we are, the consciousness of not being created for this life only grows deeper and stronger. The promise, "With long life will I satisfy him," can never be perfectly fulfilled in such a life as this. Not "threescore years and ten," nor "fourscore years" are enough for the capabilities of our intelligent, affectionate, and spiritual nature. The machinery of this mortal body may be clogged and broken, may wear out and be useless—it may become an incumbrance, a burthen, a prison—the soul, weary ofwhat has become its burthen and its prison, may long to be released by death; but it is only a life beyond the reach of these infirmities that can satisfy the soul. It is only such a life that can develop all the capabilities of our higher nature. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee." The hope that clings to God, is a hope that cannot die.

Such is one view of life as seen from the position at which I stand to-day. This life is not enough for us. We are made for more than this.

II. Looking at our mortal life in the light, as it were, of life's sunset, I am impressed with this view: No man lives to any good purpose who lives for himself alone. My individual life on earth—what is it? Its whole duration is only a few years at the longest; and, when it is ended, what will be the difference to me whether I have been rich or poor—whether I have lived in one house or another—whether I have been clothed in purple and fine linen and have fared sumptuously every day, or have shivered in rags and been pinched with hunger—whether the sculptured marble is piled above my grave, or only the rounded turf shows that there a dead body was buried? My individual life, by the ordinance of the Creator, is intimately blended with other lives in relations of duty, of dependence, and of love; and the ties that bind me to others and make their welfare dear to me, forbid me to live for individual interests of my own. My life in this world is not individual but social, and, as I approach the end of life, it is natural for me to take less thought for my individual interests here, and more for the welfare of those whom I am so soon to leave behind me. As I find and feel that my work is almost done, the appeal seems more urgent than ever before: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave;" but O how preposterous does it seem, at this time of life, to be working for individual and selfish interests of my own! When my end is just before me, and I understand so clearly the measure of my days, what it is, my individual interests in this world sink into insignificance; but the affections which bind me to those with whose life my life is blended, to those who in the course of nature shall survive me, and to those who shall come after me when the places that know me now shall know me no more, lose none of their strength. It is natural for me to love the dear ones in my home, and all that are nearest to my life, the more and not the less for that I must leave them so soon. For the same reason it is natural for me to care not less but more for the future of the flock among whom I have labored so long in my high vocation, now that my labor is so nearly ended. For the same reason, it is natural for me, in

these few last years of life, to care not less but more for those aggregated and enduring interests which involve the welfare of millions and of successive generations. Now that there is, in this life, continually less and less that can tempt my selfish hopes, is it not natural that I should do what I can, more freely and earnestly, for the commonwealth, for the nation, for the church of God on earth, for the world of mankind?

Think, now, young as well as old, is this view of life an illusion? Or is it a sober sense of the reality? Think, is it wise to make your own individual and selfish interest the end for which you scheme, and work, and struggle in this world? Think, is not that great law of religion—that law which is so gloriously illustrated in the life and death of God's Incarnate Son—that law, "None of us liveth to himself"—revealed to you even in the measure of your days? In this dying yet enduring world, made up of human lives so intimately mingled with each other in all sorts of natural affections and sympathies—where every man is connected with those around him and with others far away, in ten thousand relations of inevitable dependence and of duty—where each individual life, so transient in itself, is inseparably related to the enduring interests of society—how preposterous is a life of mere self-seeking! How truly is that life described by the Psalmist: "Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." Are you willing to live such a life?

III. Looking upon human life from the position in which I stand to-day, I am impressed with this view: WORLDLY DISTINCTIONS, HOWEVER GREAT, ARE INSIGNIFICANT, WHEN COMPARED WITH DISTINCTIONS OF PERSONAL CHARACTER BEFORE GOD. In proportion as we consciously approach the end of our probation, and know, distinctly, the measure of our days, what it is, all those distinctions which worldly minds most value, lose their importance in our view. Wealth, social position, learning, intellectual eminence, the admiration and applause of men—all such things, as I advance in life, seem less and less to be respected in comparison with goodness, purity of heart, the simple and earnest love of truth and right, and the unselfish readi-

ness to labor and suffer at the call of duty or of love These elements of personal character seem more and more beautiful —more and more desirable—to one who surveys life, calmly, in the mellow and sober light of life's latest years. What are all worldly distinctions—wealth, station, honor, admiration, applause—when seen no longer in the bewildering glare of this deceitful world!—what are they to one who knows and feels that his remaining days are as a hand-breadth and his life as a vapor!—what are they when seen in the thoughtful twilight between this hurried, transitory life and the hereafter?

Is this view a mistaken one? Or am I right in the impression which I get in looking upon life as it is now presented to my view? Is goodness more worthy to be honored than any sort of greatness—more to be desired as a personal endowment than all riches and honors in this world? Is it better to be like Christ than to be anything within the range of human possibility? Is it better to have that dignity and that felicity than to have all that the world can give you?

You acknowledge, then, that this view of life is not a mere hallucination, and that to be like Christ is really the best possible attainment. Well, do you know *how* you can become like Christ? He calls you to believe on him, and to follow him, that you may be like him. "Come to me," he says, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden"—ye that are walking in a vain show—ye that are disquieted in vain—ye that are laboriously and fruitlessly seeking great things for yourselves—ye that are heaping up riches and know not who shall gather them—"come to me, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Learn of him, taking his yoke upon you, and giving yourself up, confidingly and gratefully, to his guidance, and you shall be transformed into his likeness by the renewing of your mind, and shall find that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. You can never form such a character without his intervention reconciling you to God, and giving you his Holy Spirit.

IV. This brings me to say that, as I now survey the measure of my days, I am more than ever before impressed with THE CONVICTION THAT NO SORT OF LIFE IS SO REASONABLE OR

BLESSED AS A LIFE OF GODLINESS. The nearer I come to the end of my time on earth—the narrower the space between me and my grave—the deeper and clearer is the feeling in my soul, that godliness (as religion is called in the New Testament,) the hearty acknowledgment of God, the habitual worship of God, the free and thankful service of God in all the work he gives us here, the soul's joyful confidence in God's love and wisdom, fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, is that without which life is wasted and lost. Godliness—the habitual sense of God's loving presence and unfailing care, and the consciousness of walking with him in all duty and through all the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow—the habit of referring all things to God's will, and of trusting all things to his wisdom and his love—is the strength, the vital growth, the highest beauty, and the sanctity, of all human goodness; and without it life, as related to our highest capabilities, is a failure. Life without godliness dishonors God by dishonoring the nature which he has given us. Unless God be with us, all the bloom of life is ever vanishing away, like the withering grass, like the fading flower;—the grace of the fashion of it ever perishing. But if God be with us, if we see the Lord always before us, if all our affections and all our thoughts pay homage to him, then, all along the way of our pilgrimage, the earth blooms with unfading beauty, and life, to its latest hour, is full of light.

Let me say farther, in this connection, that, as I grow older, the idea or conception of godliness becomes, to me, more simple as well as more attractive. God is revealed to men in Christ —revealed to you—revealed as reconciling the world to himself. If you will learn of Christ, he will make you acquainted with God—acquainted with him not only in his majestic purity, in his adorable and awful abhorrence of evil, and in the grandeur of his law and government, but also in his loving kindness and the unspeakable tenderness of his regard for you in the ruin into which you have fallen by sinning against him. Let Christ teach you, and you shall see in him the glory of the Father—a glory not far away beyond the stars, but near at hand to love you, to embrace you, and to bless you. Learn of Christ, and you shall speak to God, as a child speaking to a

father. "The doctrine which is according to godliness," and in which godliness has its root and life, is not a system of metaphysics or of philosophy; it is simply the story of Christ loving us, living for us, suffering and dying for us, and living for ever as our Saviour. It is the simple but sublime testimony, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is the "faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Accept that faithful saying—take to your heart that sublime and inspiring testimony—grasp it as life from the dead—cling to it as your hope forever. Thus you shall receive the kingdom of God as a little child, and in receiving it you are born again. Thus old things in your theory and plan of living, and in your way of thinking, pass away, and all things become new; and the life which you live here on the earth, is a pilgrimage to heaven. "Behold, what manner of love is this which the Father hath bestowed on us!"

DISCOURSE II.

REMEMBRANCE OF FORTY YEARS IN THE PARISH.

PREACHED MARCH 12, 1865.

DEUT. viii. 2.—Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years.

THE words of Moses to the tribes of Israel, after their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, are equally applicable to you and to me this day. Forty years ago, on the second Lord's-day in March, 1825, I began my public ministry in this house as the pastor of this Church and Society. Your kind congratulations offered to me on the anniversary of my installation, relieve me of the necessity of any apology for the use which I propose to make of the text, or for the seeming egotism of a discourse in which I cannot avoid speaking of myself. The relation between you and me is such—so like a confidential friendship cemented by long acquaintance—that I may speak without any fear of being unkindly interpreted, even though the occasion leads me to speak of "myself as your servant for Jesus's sake." A free use of personal reminiscences may be permitted on this occasion, and may help the serious and religious impression which such an occasion in the house of God ought to produce on you and on me.

Forty years ago, this congregation had been more than two years without a pastor, Dr. Taylor having been dismissed from his charge in December, 1822. The pulpit had been supplied, some of the time, by the late pastor; and, while his services could be had in that way, the people were comparatively indifferent about obtaining a more permanent ministry. Yet several persons had been employed who might be regarded as candidates. Of these, one, whose subsequent history was not creditable to himself or to religion, was very solicitous to obtain a call, and succeeded so far as to rally a considerable party in his favor. Another was the amiable and gifted Carlos Wilcox, afterwards the first pastor of the North Church in Hartford. The gentle simplicity and attractiveness of his character, and the elaborate exquisiteness and evangelical earnestness and instructiveness of his discourses, made such an impression, that probably he would have been invited to the pastorate, but for the belief of judicious men that his health would not be adequate to so great a charge, and that his life would be—as it proved—a short one. Another candidate was Albert Barnes, then recently from the Princeton Seminary, who supplied the pulpit for six weeks, and who is remembered to this day by some among us, who heard him at that time with a just appreciation of his capability. Perhaps the Church and Society never made a greater mistake than when they threw away the opportunity of placing in the pastoral office here a man who has since been so distinguished for his usefulness as a preacher and a pastor. I have never known how to account for it but by supposing that his not being a graduate of Yale College was permitted to have too much weight with leading minds in the congregation. Yet no consideration of that kind could hinder the Society from uniting quite harmoniously in a call to one whose voice they had not heard, but who was in the height of his popularity as pastor of a Presbyterian Church in New York, the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, now surviving in his venerable age. Perhaps it was well for his reputation and usefulness that he declined the call, for marvelously as his gifts were adapted to the sphere in which he was then shining, there is room for doubt whether they were equally suited to so quiet

a city as New Haven then was, and to the staid disposition and sturdy Congregationalism of this Church.

At last the Society's Committee, partly (as I suppose) at the recommendation of Professor Stuart, sent for a young man who had been studying theology at Andover. Seven years before he had come, a fatherless boy, to Yale College; and, in consideration of his circumstances, he had been admitted to the Sophomore class, though imperfectly prepared for that standing, and though the college rule as to the age for admission must be somewhat relaxed in his favor. But though for three years he had walked these streets, and though the college officers were strangely kind in their estimation of him he was almost as much a stranger in the city of New Haven as if he had passed those three years of college-life at Cambridge or at Hanover. Perhaps half a dozen members of the congregation—hardly more—knew him by sight, and of them not more than one had ever heard him preach. But the Committee knew that he had never sought an opportunity of appearing here as a candidate, and that on one occasion, when incidentally in New Haven, he had refused to preach lest it might be thought that he had put himself in the way of the invitation.

My introduction here was unexpected to myself. Having passed a fourth year at Andover, as a resident licentiate, rendering some little assistance to the Professor of Sacred Rhetoric, and preaching occasionally in the churches of that region, I had determined to find for myself a field of service in the west: and on the 28th of September, 1824, I was ordained to the ministry by the Hartford North Consociation, convened in its annual meeting at Windsor. The next day, on my return to Hartford, I received a letter from the Committee of this Society, inviting me to supply their vacant pulpit. In compliance with that invitation, I preached here for the first time on the first Sabbath in October, and, with the assistance of President Day, administered the Lord's Supper. After another Sabbath I insisted on pursuing my journey westward, that, at least, I might confer with my mother before relinquishing or even suspending the design to which I had committed my-

self. The result was that I returned; and after five more weeks of probation, having preached, in all, fourteen sermons, I withdrew.

But I must not proceed in this garrulous method. Yet, in order to show you just how things were in relation to my introduction to this ministry, I may say that at the annual meeting of the Society held at the old Orange street lecture-room, December 11th, a vote inviting me to settle in the ministry here was carried by forty-two against twenty-two, and thereupon the meeting was adjourned. At the next meeting (Wednesday, December 15th) the subject was reconsidered, and by sixty-eight against twenty the Society voted their approbation of my services, and their desire that I should settle with them in the work of the ministry, and requested the Church to unite with them in inviting me "to take charge of the Society and the Church connected with it as their pastor and gospel minister." In the evening of the next Lord's-day, December 19th, a responsive vote was passed by the Church, uniting with the Society in the call. At an adjourned meeting of the Society, five days later, they agreed on the terms and conditions of settlement which should be proposed to the Pastor elect, and appointed a committee to "communicate with him on the subject of his settlement." My answer, accepting the invitation, was dated at Andover, January 17th, 1825; and upon receiving it the Church and Society united in the appointment of committees to make arrangements with the Pastor elect for his installation.

I have mentioned these particulars partly for the sake of reminding you how few of all the persons who had any part in the transactions which I have described, are now alive. Let me, therefore, repeat the names that appear upon the record. The moderator of the society-meeting was the Hon. James Hillhouse—at that time more widely known and honored than perhaps any other citizen of Connecticut. He continued to worship here almost eight years longer, but now nobody can remember him without remembering the third part of a century. He was at that time an old man, whose active life began as long ago as the Declaration of Independence, and

whose unbroken force of body and mind was the wonder of his friends; yet I am now only about seven years younger than he was then. The moderator of the church-meeting was the Rev. Dr. Morse, a venerable man, retired from the ministry and from all public employments, but he was only eighteen months older than I am to-day. The Society's clerk was Timothy Dwight Williams, a young merchant greatly beloved and esteemed, the efficient and devoted superintendent of the Sabbath-school. He has been dead thirty-four years, but I did not think of him as a young man when he died. The committee entrusted by the Society with the duty of communicating their call, were the Hon. Dyer White, Deacon Nathan Whiting, and Deacon Stephen Twining. The call from the Church was communicated by its senior officer, Deacon Samuel Darling. The committee of arrangements were, on the part of the Church, Deacons Darling and Whiting, and, on the part of the Society, Hon. Isaac Mills, Captain Henry Daggett,—a revolutionary officer,—and one young man, William J. Forbes. The youngest of all these died beyond the noon of life, more than twenty-five years ago; and how few are there here to-day who can distinctly remember his face and figure, or even the public grief at his funeral!

I go back to the Council which was convened for the installation. It consisted of twelve members, clerical and lay, of whom three are still living. And, inasmuch as customs have changed since then, I may be allowed to speak of the proceedings more particularly than I should otherwise do. In those days it was thought that the ordination or installation of a pastor was a transaction too serious to be hurried over. A day of fasting and prayer had been kept by the Church in preparation for the appointed service. The Council was assembled on Tuesday, March 8th, at the old wooden lecture-room in Orange street, and was organized by the choice of President Day as moderator, and Professor Fitch as scribe. There was a respectable attendance of clergymen and theological students, and also of those who, as members of the Church or of the Society, had an immediate interest in the proceedings—so that the room was pretty well filled. The examination was pro-

tracted; and many questions were asked, of which I could not then see the bearing, and which I answered without suspecting their relation to theological parties and controversies then soon to break forth. That examination having been completed, and the candidate having been approved, the public service did not follow in the evening—still less was it postponed to the next Sunday evening, for the sake of getting a large audience, and avoiding the competition with places of public amusement; but, the next morning, at 9 o'clock, the Council reassembled at the lecture-room with the committees and officers of the Church and Society; and, when the record of the proceedings had been read and corrected, the Council moved in procession to this house, the officers of the Church and Society taking the lead. Here a large congregation had already assembled, filling the seats, above and below, save such as had been reserved for the procession. The introductory prayer was offered by the Rev. Carlos Wilcox, of the North Church in Hartford. The sermon (afterwards published) was preached by the Rev. Joel Hawes, of the First Church in Hartford. The prayer of installation was offered by the venerable Stephen W. Stebbins, of West Haven, whose memory, even in his own parish, has now become a beautiful tradition, though he lived sixteen years after the time of which I am speaking. The charge was given by Dr. Taylor, as former pastor of the Church; the fellowship of the Churches was expressed by Mr. Merwin; and the closing prayer was offered by Professor Fitch.

You recognize the names of the three survivors. President Day had then been at the head of the College less than eight years. To-day his successor has been in office more than eighteen years. Professor Fitch had just completed the seventh year of his ministry. He resigned his charge thirteen years ago, claiming, after a longer term of service than any of his predecessors—and reasonably claiming,—exemption on account of his advancing age. Dr. Hawes is only seven years my senior in the ministry. He, too, in his yet vigorous old age, has laid down all the responsibilities and burthens of his

pastoral office, and is now rejoicing in the ministry of his successor.

There is no record by which I can conveniently and exactly ascertain how many members there were in this Church forty years ago. In 1820, (May 1st,) the number was three hundred and sixty-five. The large additions of the two following years—far exceeding the removals by death and by dismission—must have increased the number to about five hundred and fifty, in 1825. But of the entire body of communicants at that time, there are now connected with this Church, and residing in the city of New Haven, only forty,—of whom six are confined by the infirmities of age, and will probably never visit this house again. Thirty-four only of the five hundred and fifty (or thereabout) who were members in full communion forty years ago, remain now among us to sit down at the table of the Lord. Surely, my friends, though I may say that you are dearer to me than your fathers and predecessors could be with whom I entered into this pastoral relation, you cannot deny that it is time for me to count myself among the survivors of a generation that will soon have passed away.

As I call to mind the circumstances in which I entered on my ministry here, I cannot but wonder that I am here to-day. The Church, at that time, was much less homogeneous and united than it is now. Less than twenty years had passed since the dismission of Dr. Dana, who had been conspicuous all his days, both here and in his earlier pastorate at Wallingford, as one of the "Old Light" or "Old Divinity" party—the "Old Arminians," as they were often called by way of reproach. Under his ministry there was little sympathy with reminiscences of "the Great Awakening" in the time of Edwards, or with any measures or efforts tending to a religious excitement in the community. In the nineteen years and four months since the termination of his ministry, there had been two pastorates: that of Professor Stuart, which continued three years and ten months, and that of Dr. Taylor, which continued ten years and eight months. Those two men, though greatly unlike in some respects, were alike in this;—they believed in the revival of religion—they believed in the

Edwardean or "New Light" views of what religion is as a personal experience—they believed in the distinctive New England theology—they were powerful preachers, each in his own way, their sermons being exceedingly unlike the cautiously correct and coldly elegant discourses of Dr. Dana. The first of those pastors had commenced, and the other had carried on, a revolution in the prevalent character and habits of the Church. Yet, at the end of twenty years, there were some well preserved remains of what the old Church was before the ministry of Mr. Stuart. There were elderly people who had been trained under the ministry of Dr. Dana and of his predecessor Mr. Whittelsey, and who had no great share in the intense religious activity that had flamed up around them—men of great worth and great weight in the community, and of unquestionable character as Christians, but who had not been accustomed in their youth to weekly prayer-meetings, or to evening-meetings of any kind. On the other hand, there were those who could hardly conceive of religious character as manifesting itself in any other way than in the activities of a general awakening. In a Church thus constituted, it was hardly to be expected that a young Pastor, unskillful and inexperienced, would be acceptable to all parties.

Moreover, the place to which I had been introduced was exceedingly difficult in other respects. Professor Stuart, by his earnest and rousing sermons, had taught the people not to be satisfied with any preaching but such as would make them think and feel, and had made the place a difficult one for his successor. Dr. Taylor, in his turn, had made it more difficult. The Society was proud of having had two such pastors in succession, and proudly grieved at having lost them. I think I understand myself; and I know it is not an affectation of modesty to say that I never had any such power in the pulpit as they had in their best days. For many years after the commencement of my pastorate, I was habitually brought into most disadvantageous comparison not only with those distinguished preachers, but with others of like celebrity. How it was that I continued here long enough to become a fixture,

cannot be easily explained. I only know that the congregation was not made up of critical hearers; that the few who were disposed to be critical and to find fault because my poor discourses did not equal those of my predecessors, were not the most capable of forming an intelligent and judicious opinion; and that those whose unfavorable judgment, had it been freely uttered, would have been fatal to me, were very kind.

Nor was this all that made my position here a trying one. The pastorate of Professor Stuart had been made memorable by a great religious revival, the first that had shaken this community in more than fifty years. A new era of awakening had opened in New England and elsewhere. Dr. Taylor's term of service was marked by two such times of spiritual refreshing—the last of which was just about coincident with the close of his ministry. This was in most respects a great advantage to me, for which I hope to be thankful forever. But it made the place very difficult for a young and inexperienced pastor. The revival, considered as a movement in the community, had spent itself; and there were those in the congregation who naturally expected the young minister to reproduce immediately the excitement which they had enjoyed so much, which had gathered into the Church more than a hundred in a single year, and in which Mr. Nettleton, the famous revivalist, had employed all his skill.

I have mentioned the fact that a minority in the Society voted against my settlement. Though I never desired to know or remember who they were, I had the satisfaction of knowing that most of them were soon numbered among my kindest friends. Others, who were at first among the most enthusiastic of my friends, and whom I regarded as the best and most active members of the Church, were disappointed (as they had good reason to be,) and began to think very seriously that New Haven needed a more efficient ministry. Before one year had been completed, I began to be depressed with the feeling that those who had hoped so much from me were disappointed in my endeavors to serve them, and with the desponding expectation that my ministry would be a

failure. Dear to me are the names of some whose fatherly counsel and comfort, and of others whose friendly intimations and tokens of sympathy, kept me at my post when tempted to seek some other employment. At last, just as the third year was closing, there came a time of revival; and, in the ensuing year, forty-eight persons, most of them younger than their youthful pastor, were received to communion on the profession of their faith. From that time onward, though I have had much to dishearten me in the consciousness of falling far below my aims and hopes, and though I have not been left without my share of personal and domestic sorrows, my burthens have been lightened by the feeling that I was not laboring in vain, as well as by the ever growing evidence of regard on the part of a people who have not only honored me for my work's sake, but have loved me far beyond my desert. From the time of that first distinct and memorable success in my ministry, I have known better than I knew before how to preach the gospel, and I trust I am still learning.

I need not enumerate here the various periods of spiritual prosperity and progress in the congregation, which have cheered and lightened my work, and without which my ministry would have been a sorrowful failure. Oh that we might see such times of revival again before I shall rest from these labors! The last six years have left upon our records no traces of great success; and the thought of continuing to labor thus—the accessions to our communion hardly keeping the number good—is the only painful thought in the prospect of my growing old.

An examination of our records—careful but not absolutely exact—shows me that in these forty years twelve hundred and sixty-four members have been added to our communion. The number received by profession, six hundred and six, is considerably greater than the whole number of communicants either now or at the time of my installation. Meanwhile, we have given largely of our members to other churches that have grown up around us. I find the results of my ministry not only in the stability and growing usefulness of this Church, but also in many

of these younger churches. Half the original members of the Third Church went from us, with our free consent and with my hearty approbation. Our colored members—a very respectable class in their religious character—were dismissed, with a few exceptions, to unite with others of their race in forming the African Church. What is now the College Street Church began in the zeal of a few young men, most of whom went from us. The Chapel Street Church, at its beginning, might almost have been called a daughter of the old First Church. More recently the Davenport Church is the result of a city-mission conducted in our name, and largely aided by our contributions. Most of our Cedar Hill parishioners went to the Fair Haven Church. The Church at Westville was formed, mostly, out of this.

I must postpone to the afternoon some things which I had intended to say, familiarly, about the changes which have been going on for the last forty years outside of our own congregation or parish—in this city—in our country at large—and in relation to the general interest and progress of Christ's kingdom throughout the world. But before I interrupt these desultory recollections, let me say that the results which have come from this feeble ministry of mine, are not summed up in the statement that the old First Church, through all these years of change, has held its place in the community of sister-churches—is now as numerous and as strong as at any former period—is firm on the foundation of the ancient faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour of lost men—is training up its children, as diligently and as intelligently as at any former time, in the right ways of the Lord. No, the records of this ministry are written (for weal or woe) on individual minds that live forever, and whom it has been my privilege to guide and strengthen, to instruct and to comfort, in life and in death. Those records are written forever on minds that are now in heaven before the throne of God and the Lamb—on minds that have passed beyond the reach of hope and opportunity—on minds still in this world of trial and of conflict; some, around me here; others far away in the West, or on the bloody fields of

the South, or where our golden states look out on the Pacific, or in lands beyond the sea. Those records are written forever on minds that have believingly received the word, and have learned to love Christ and to serve him—and, alas! on minds to whom the word of life is becoming a savor of death unto death, and whose condemnation will be that they loved darkness rather than light.

DISCOURSE III.

REMEMBRANCE OF FORTY YEARS IN OTHER RELATIONS.

PREACHED MARCH 12, 1865.

DEUT. viii. 2.—Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years.

IN the morning discourse, I intimated my purpose to speak, this afternoon, in a familiar way, concerning some of the changes which have been going on around us within the last forty years, and which may be regarded as involving the progress and welfare, and the duty and responsibility, of this ancient Church.

I. Most naturally, our thoughts turn first to the changes which forty years have brought forth *in the city of New Haven.* In the changes which our city is continually undergoing, whether for good or for evil, whether in growth or in decay, this Church of our fathers must always have a parochial—and I might almost say, a parental, interest. Every church sustains an intimate relation to the local community in which it dwells, and from which its interests and its first duties are inseparable; but the relation of this Church to New Haven is in some respects

peculiar. Historically, the town itself, as an organized community, is a daughter of this Church. It was for the sake of planting here a church encumbered by no human traditions, and dependent on no human authority, that the founders of the New Haven Colony left their homes in pleasant England, and their trade and affairs in busy London, and ventured their all in the enterprise of establishing here a civil commonwealth of Christian men, "the Lord's free people;" and this is the Church which they planted here before their settlement had even received an English name. It was for the sake of gaining for their Church a place and habitation, that all this beautiful plain, with the surrounding hills and waters, was purchased of the savages whom they found here. It was for the sake of their Church that they planned their city, and reserved this central square for public uses, first of all, building here their humble temple, and then making their graves around it. It was not till after they had constituted their Church by selecting from among themselves the seven men whom they deemed most "fit for the foundation-work," that their civil organization was solemnly inaugurated, the same seven men being entrusted with that work also by the free consent of all the planters. Such was the relation of this Church, in its beginning, to the civil community which was formed around it; and though political theories and arrangements, and laws and forms of government, have changed, it has never ceased to care for the welfare of the town. Its position as a center from which Christian influences are to radiate, becomes more important as the town grows in population and wealth, and in all those industries and institutions that constitute its commercial importance and its power. If the future of New Haven is to be worthy of its history, those moral and religious influences which the founders of this Church brought with them, and which have given character to so many generations, must operate in time to come as in time past.

Forty years ago, the population of the city was, by the then latest census, 7,147. We may reckon its actual population in 1825, with Westville and Fair Haven, as not much more than 8,000. Within the area of the township, there were two

Congregational churches, one Protestant Episcopal, one Methodist Episcopal, and one Baptist; and all the church-edifices, except the Baptist, then recently built and only half as large as it now is, were on the Green. Within the same area, now, there are probably 50,000 inhabitants—six times as many as there were then. The two Congregational churches are now ten, with nearly 3,500 communicants; and connected with these churches there are three city-mission chapels in which public worship is regularly maintained. Beside these there is an independent church which was originally Congregational in its government. There are also seven Protestant Episcopal churches with one mission chapel,—six Methodist Episcopal churches, including their German mission,—and three Baptist churches. In addition to all these, we have a German Moravian church; a small German Baptist church; a Universalist church; three large Roman Catholic churches, filled to overflowing with congregations of emigrants and children of emigrants from Roman Catholic countries; and finally, a synagogue of German-speaking Jews. If an intelligent person had fallen asleep in New Haven forty years ago, and had waked up this morning, he would hardly have known the place. Such a man, waking after forty years of unconsciousness, would be confounded. In the jangle of the sabbath-bells, sounding from so many towers, he would be lost; nor would he find himself till he should look upon this Public Square. Here, in the aspect of these three churches, side by side, he would see the old New Haven once so familiar to his view.

We need only count up, by name, these places of worship,—comparing the present time, in that respect, with forty years ago,—and we realize how great a change has come to pass. It is not merely that what was then little more than a pleasant village, though dignified with the name and charter of a city, has now grown to be larger than any city in New England then was; it is not merely that the streets which were then so quiet are now crowded and noisy with business; it is not merely that the place has become a great hive of manufacturing industry; it seems almost as if New Haven had been detached from the old Puritan State of Connecticut, and had

been anchored by some foreign shore. The population here, forty years ago, was of purely English descent, and I think I may say that, with the exception of a few colored people, there were not twenty families here whose ancestors did not come over with the first settlers of New England. But where are we now? Strangers of other races, and of other languages and traditions,—the Celt, the German, and the Jew,—attracted by the liberty which our fathers achieved for us, have come in, by thousands, to share our inheritance, and to mingle their destiny with ours.

Such changes in the city, and especially in the character of its population, cannot have taken place without increasing greatly the responsibility of the New Haven churches as local institutions. What was the local or parochial work of our two Congregational churches forty years ago, compared with what the Congregational churches in New Haven, (not to mention those of other names and forms, but of like precious faith,) ought to be doing now? The time will not permit me to dwell upon this thought. None who hear me can fail to discern something at least of its significance. In this respect, the change which the last forty years have made is greater than all that came to pass in the foregoing century. Thus measured, the distance between this day and the beginning of my ministry here is greater than the distance between 1825 and 1725.

Other changes have taken place here, which have great significance. Forty years ago, New Haven had really no system of public schools. The Lancasterian school, in the basement of the Methodist Church on the Green, was the only common school worth naming; and that was a school for boys alone, the Lancasterian school for girls not having been established. In all the city there was no such edifice as a school-house for the common schools. A few district-schools, taught by women, in hired apartments, were sustained partly by dividends from the school-fund, and partly by a petty charge for tuition. But now the common schools of New Haven, distributed throughout the city, and provided with commodious and stately houses built expressly for their use, are almost a university of themselves,—the people's university. Free (in theory) to all the

children of the city, as the highways are free to all travelers, they exceed in the variety and extent of their teaching, and in the thoroughness of their discipline, all that I dared to hope for, when, on the first Thanksgiving-day after my installation, I attempted to give some views of what common schools ought to be. At that time, my views, as I found reason to believe, were deemed chimerical by practical men, but now they are more than realized in almost every particular. Nay, so high are the aims of the system now in operation, that there is danger of its leaving out of view the most important reason for its own existence, namely, the duty of the State to take care effectually that no portion of its population shall sink into barbarism, and, therefore, to take care that no child in the community shall be permitted to grow up without the rudiments, at least, of a civilizing education. What we most need, just now, is not higher and better schools for the benefit of such families as are able and willing to make use of them, but some adequate provision for the benefit of children whom our admirable system, as now administered, does not reach,—some arrangement that shall include the children who are now excluded, because, in the extreme poverty of their homes, they cannot comply with existing regulations,—some arrangement that shall take hold of the neglected children in our streets, those young mendicants that are growing into thieves, those boys that are growing up to be ruffians and burglars, those wretched girls whose prospect in life is misery and infamy. Forty years ago, that stratum in society which now lies below the reach of our common schools, hardly existed here. At most it was too inconsiderable to be dangerous. But now, in the confluence of nations and religions which swells our population, the danger is too great to be neglected.

Think of another change. Forty years ago the vice of intemperance, engendered and perpetuated by the common use of intoxicating liquors for refreshment and conviviality, had never received any serious check in this community. The moderate drinking of such liquors was a universal fashion. At that time the mischievousness of the fashion was hardly suspected. Certainly the obvious and unfailing tendency of

moderate drinking to become, in multitudes of instances, immoderate, had never been adequately impressed upon the public. The drinking-usage was everywhere, and everywhere the fashion was as despotic in its demands as it was perilous in its tendency. None could abstain from the personal use of those liquors, without incurring the reproach of eccentricity and perhaps of moroseness. Not to offer such refreshment in ordinary hospitality seemed inhospitable and niggardly. On the occasion of my installation, a public dinner was of course provided for the council and attending clergymen, together with the officers of the Church and Society; and there was an ample supply not only of wine but also of more perilous stuff. I also remember that, two months later, when I attended for the first time a meeting of the Associated Pastors of the district, the sideboard of good father Swift, at whose house we met, was decorated with decanters containing distilled spirits, and of more than one kind. But that very year the Christian duty of voluntary abstinence as an expedient against the tendency to intemperance, and of combining, by mutual pledges, to break the power of a tyrannical fashion, began to be recognized by Christian men, and thenceforward such means of refreshment disappeared from ordination-dinners and all clerical meetings. In a little while the tyrannical fashion had lost its power. Every man was at liberty to practice personal abstinence, either for his own safety or for the sake of saving others; and there was no law of hospitality requiring any man to tempt his guests by inviting them to drink with him. I need not say how much good was gained in those early years of the temperance-reformation; nor need I say that the liberty which was then achieved remains to this day. Yet it must be confessed that, within the last few years, much has been lost. We had gained some measure of safety for our young men. I may even say that the convivial use of wine and spirituous liquors had become unfashionable, at least in the better classes of society. Much has been lost in these respects. Never were young men, in this city, more beset than now with temptations to intemperance, and to the vices which accompany intemperance; and, so far as my opportunities of observation have

informed me, the old fashion of introducing intoxicating drinks for conviviality in social entertainments is reviving. Partly this may be a natural reaction against the attempt to propagate extreme opinions, and to enforce them by denunciation; but in no small part it is the result of ill advised and impracticable legislation. One consequence of the latest law enacted in this State against the sale of intoxicating liquors, was the establishment of private club-rooms, where young men—and some who are not young—train themselves and each other into habits of intemperate drinking. I could tell you of one such club—what its chosen name is, I do not know, but I could tell you where its rooms are—a club, some of whose members have died already of the habits which they formed or indulged and strengthened in those secret apartments, while others, warned in vain by what they have seen, are going on to the same fate. The history of the temperance-reformation in its origin and progress, and in its lasting success, is full of encouragement, and, on the other hand, the history of its reactions and declensions is full of admonition.

II. Let us now look beyond our immediate neighborhood, and think of our relations to *the country at large*. The New England Churches have always been characterized by a patriotic spirit. When the English exiles at Leyden passed over to America and commenced their settlement at Plymouth, there was planted, on "the wild New England shore," the seed not only of a Christian civilization, but of a nationality distinct from that of the English people. That seed, planted in weakness, might have been trodden down and destroyed: but when the Pilgrims were followed across the Atlantic by the great Puritan migration from old England; when the towns on Massachusetts Bay, and the towns on Connecticut river, and then the confederate towns of the New Haven jurisdiction, came into being as political communities sharing in the life and molded by the power of that religious polity which English monarchy and English aristocracy would not tolerate; it became certain that there was to be here, in the fullness of time, a nation not simply English but Anglo-American, a nation with its own distinctive character and life. Most naturally,

therefore, the churches of the New England polity have been characterized, through all their history, by a patriotic sympathy with the growth and welfare of this great Anglo-American nation; and looking back, as we do, on this occasion, to a date just five days after the inauguration of John Quincy Adams, it is natural for us to ask what changes these forty years have wrought in our country, and in the Christian work which the churches have been doing and are yet to do for the nation.

Forty years ago the United States were twenty-four in number; now they are thirty-six. Then only one State had been established beyond the Mississippi; now there are three beyond the Rocky Mountains. Then, in the fifth year after the census of 1820, the population of the United States was estimated at eleven millions; now, in the fifth year after the census of 1860, it cannot well be estimated at much less than thirty-five millions. Such are some of the most obvious changes which our country has undergone since I began my work—changes which mark and measure the steady progress of the nation in material greatness.

In this connection we cannot but remember that, forty years ago, there were in the United States about one million and seven hundred and fifty thousand slaves, and that the census of 1860 gave the number at a little less than four millions. When I began my work in this place, the country had recently been agitated by an unsuccessful attempt to secure the abolition of slavery in Missouri before the admission of that State into the Union. At that time, the religious feeling of the country was strongly, and, I may say, unanimously pronounced against the institution of slavery. Religious men, even in the slave-holding States, professed to regard that institution as an evil which was to be endured till it could be peacefully and safely abolished. Certainly there was, in Connecticut, no party, religious or political, that dared to speak for slavery as if it were a just or beneficent arrangement, or as if the institution was capable of any defense, either on grounds of natural justice, or in the light of the Christian religion. Slavery and the internal commerce in slaves were then regarded as "the peculiar institution" of those States in

which they were legalized; and the idea that the Constitution of the Union had made slavery national, and had given it a right to propagate itself without let or hindrance over all the national territory, had found no acceptance here.

My own mind had been deeply interested in the discussion of slavery as related to the future of our country. The Missouri question had been sharply debated in Congress and everywhere else, while I was a college-student; and by religious writers and speakers it had been discussed as a question involving great religious interests. In the progress of my theological studies, I had been led to inquire more carefully concerning the duty of Christian patriots to the black population of this country, both bond and free. From the beginning of my official ministry, I spoke without reserve, from the pulpit and elsewhere, against slavery as a wrong and a curse, threatening disaster and ruin to the nation. Many years I did this without being blamed, except as I was blamed for not going far enough. Not a dog dared to wag his tongue at me for speaking against slavery. I have always held and always asserted the same principles on that subject which I held and asserted at the beginning. Yet you know how I have been blamed and even execrated, in these later years, for declaring, here and elsewhere, the wickedness of buying and selling human beings, or of violating in any way those human rights which are inseparable from human nature. I make no complaint in making this allusion: all reproaches, all insults endured in the conflict with so gigantic a wickedness against God and man, are to be received and remembered not as injuries but as honors.

Where are we now? The institution of slavery, so powerful only a few years ago, so arrogant and encroaching, so determined either to rule the Union or to destroy it, is perishing under the vials of God's wrath poured out upon our country. The end of the great rebellion which was begun for the purpose of making slavery perpetual, is drawing near, and it is sure to be the end of slavery. What a change is this! I have expected and predicted that slavery would be abolished in our country, knowing assuredly that there is a divine justice

in the providence that rules the world. There was a time when I hoped for a peaceful abolition in the progress of civilization and under the influence of Christianity; but, years ago, the ferocious tyranny that permitted no word of discussion or of inquiry tending to overthrow the system, and that kept the slaves by law in brutish ignorance so that their bondage might be perpetual, forbade that hope. For years, all really thoughtful men have felt the growing probability that slavery would end in blood. Yet, till this war began, we never thought that the end would be in our time. That I have lived to see slavery already virtually abolished, and its complete extinction drawing nearer every day, fills me with wonder.

Somewhat less than twenty years ago, I published a volume of Essays on Slavery, which I had contributed to various periodicals. A copy of the volume fell into the hands of a village lawyer in one of our great western States. He was at that time quite unknown to fame, but his neighbors knew him well as an intelligent, sagacious, honest man, capable of great things and worthy of the highest trusts; and he had just then been elected, for the first time and the last, to be their representative in Congress. Less than four years ago, not knowing that he had ever heard of me, I had the privilege of an interview with him; and his first word, after our introduction to each other, was a reference to that volume, with a frank approval of its principles. Since then I have heard of his mentioning the same book to a friend of mine in terms which showed that it had made an impression on his earnest and thoughtful soul. The man to whom I refer has just been inaugurated, the second time, President of the United States; and his illustrious name is forever associated with the proclamation which sealed the doom of slavery. I am not vain enough to think that his great mind, so earnest in the love of justice, so confident in the conviction that right must finally prevail against wrong, so far-seeing in the discernment of principles and their bearings, needed any guidance or teaching from me; but it is something to think of in this review of forty years, that when Abraham Lincoln, nineteen years ago, first found himself, as an elected representative in Congress, face to face with slavery in

its relation to questions of practical statesmanship, the studies and debates through which I had been conducted were in any way serviceable to him.

As we think of the new aspect which the abolition of slavery, now almost complete, gives to the future of our country, the home-missionary work of the American Churches arrests our attention. It was in the year 1825 that consultations were held, and arrangements made, which resulted in the institution of the American Home Missionary Society. That organization was formed with the design of combining in one system of coöperative efforts the strength of the entire Presbyterian body, and of some other ecclesiastical connections, as well as of the New England Churches. At first the design of coöperation was in some degree realized; but, gradually, the contributing churches of other denominations and connections have fallen off and entered into separate enterprises, till now the institution can hardly be said to have any supporters save the Congregational churches in New England, and those that have sprung up in New York and the West. How great the home-missionary work in the United States has become, and what hold it has upon the Christian patriotism of the country, I need not undertake to show statistically. Aside from all that is done by the two great bodies of Presbyterians, and by the churches which trace their descent from Holland, and by other excellent and powerful confederations of churches more remotely related to us, the work of the American Home Missionary Society, in the area which it covers, in the contributions to its treasury, in the number of its missionaries, and in the success which it has achieved and is still achieving, far exceeds all that we thought of forty years ago. Its missionaries are, to-day, not only in all the States of what we then called "the West,"—not only in all the regions of that "valley of the Mississippi" which so filled our imagination thirty years ago—but far beyond, in the Rocky Mountains, by the Great Salt Lake, and amid the strange confluences of population that are developing the resources of our Pacific States.

But home-missions in the strictest sense are only a part of the evangelization-work in our home-field. In the larger

sense, all the organizations which are at work for the diffusion of religious knowledge, or for securing in the new States and Territories the institutions of Christian learning and education, are coöperating in the home-missionary work. Forty years ago, the American Bible Society had not entered on the tenth year of its existence. Forty years ago, the American Tract Society at Boston had been working in a humble way about eleven years; and just at the time when I was beginning my official ministry here, a few good men of various ecclesiastical connections were instituting in the city of New York another American Tract Society much more aspiring in its aims. Forty years ago, the American Sunday School Union was making its earliest appeals to the public. Forty years ago, nobody had dreamed of any such thing as a systematized effort on the part of Christian patriots in these older States for promoting collegiate and theological education at the West, by aiding in the foundation and early support of colleges and theological seminaries like those of our own New England. These suggestions may help the young to understand, in part, what changes some of us have seen since the time when we were young. You whose years are yet before you, think how great a system of voluntary enterprises, for giving to our country a thoroughly Christian civilization, we have seen growing up in our day. We are soon to leave in your hands the beneficent undertakings which we have helped to inaugurate, or in which it has been our privilege to coöperate, and we bid you remember that, with all their efficiency, they are not yet commensurate with the work of making our country what it ought to be.

Think of the new era which is to open upon us when this war shall be ended. With slavery overthrown, and the unity of the nation recovered and vindicated, the millions, black and white, whom slavery has kept in a barbarous or half barbarous ignorance, will have become in reality, and not in name only, our countrymen, to be enlightened and elevated by Christian influences. Thenceforth the necessity of guarding the institution of slavery by laws against teaching men to read, and by the violent suppression of dangerous truth, will have no place

in any State or Territory of the Union, but our whole country, in its imperial extent, will be open to that free gospel which proclaims that God hath made of one blood all nations of men, and which demands for all men "the Bible without a clasp," and therefore demands and establishes the free schools in which all children alike may learn to read the Bible for themselves. A great work of evangelization must be done for our country within the next twenty years. All that has been done in these forty years is only, as it were, a preparation and a beginning. God, who has trained us for the work, and has encouraged and strengthened us by giving success, is now opening the way and calling us forward to a glorious consummation.

III. Our remembrance of the period which we are reviewing will not be complete unless we take a still wider view. Through all the course of these forty years, changes have been steadily and rapidly going on, that have great importance in relation to *the general interest and progress of Christ's kingdom in the world.* I do not refer to wars and political revolutions, so much as to changes of another sort. The period has been characterized more by the peaceful progress of civilized nations than by great wars among them; and, though there have been changes of dynasty and of empire—some of them very significant—the political map of Europe at least remains, on the whole, very much as it was in 1825. But, all this while, great forces have been working to change the character and condition of the world.

We have often marveled at the increase of human knowledge, and especially of that knowledge by which man obtains dominion over material nature; but the general diffusion of knowledge is, in some respects, even more significant. The apparatus and arrangements by which knowledge—and, to a great extent, knowledge really useful—spreads itself abroad, the demand creating the supply, and the supply ever stimulating the demand, is among the wonders of modern civilization. Think what the art of printing has become in its relation to the millions. Think of journalism, in its range of subjects, scientific, literary, political, religious,—in the diversity of its periods, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily,—and with its count-

less pages falling everywhere, like autumn-leaves in a forest. Think what popular education has become, not satisfied with teaching children to read and write, but aiming to give substantial knowledge, with something of intellectual and moral discipline. Doubtless such diffusion of knowledge is more general in our country than elsewhere; but in almost every country of the civilized world, certainly in every Protestant country, there is the same sort of progress.

Another significant fact is naturally connected with the increase and diffusion of knowledge. The mutual influence of all civilized communities is constantly increasing. Forty years ago, the seas and mountains by which nations are separated from each other, and still more the diversities of language and of political and religious institutions, were far more effectual as barriers against international influence and international sympathy than they now are, or ever can be again. Every civilized nation is now in contact, as it were, with every other. Not only do the scientific discoveries and inventions of one country pass out at once into all countries, and become the common property of civilized mankind; but the books which in one language charm or agitate the popular mind, are translated into other languages, or without translation extend their influence into other lands. Not popular literature only, but philosophy also, learns, more than heretofore, to utter itself in various languages. The thinking of Germany passes over into Britain and America; and the thinking of English-speaking nations reacts upon Germany. With the increase of facilities for travel in these years of peace and commerce, every nation comes more and more into contact with other nations by means of personal communication. Travelers and tourists of all sorts, seekers of knowledge and seekers of pleasure, are going abroad into all lands, sojourning here and there for a season, and then returning home. Great tides of emigration are setting from various nations of the old world to our shores; and then, by international postage and ocean-steamers, those Americanized myriads keep up a constant interchange of influence between the land of their new hopes and homes and the lands from which they came. Among all the nations of the civilized world, and

especially among those of Protestant Christendom, there is a growing consciousness of more intimate relations to each other and of interest in each other's welfare. Perhaps no man who does not personally remember the time when there were no railways and no sea-going steamships to facilitate and stimulate international communication, and when the magnetic telegraph had not yet been invented, can fairly understand how great a change has come to pass in the intercourse of nations, in their knowledge of each other's affairs, and in their mutual influence.

One marked consequence of all this, is an increased acquaintance and a more intimate fellowship among the Protestant Christians of different nations and languages. There is beginning to be visible a reformed and evangelical catholicity, extending through all nations, and everywhere conscious of a living unity. Evangelical Christians everywhere are becoming assimilated in their religious views and teachings, and thus they are obtaining larger and more adequate conceptions of what the Christianity is which they hold in common, and which they uphold against superstition and spiritual despotism on the one hand, and against infidelity and destructive rationalism on the other. There is indeed no "gift of tongues" like that which attested the first glorious coming of the Comforter; but Christian sympathies are awakened which utter themselves, praying and praising God, in all the languages of the civilized world, and which pass from land to land, and traverse oceans, with greetings of brotherly affection. We see not indeed—nor need we desire to see—a corporate unity under one ecclesiastical government; but we see what is better, a spiritual unity of aspiration and of voluntary coöperation for the advancement of that kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." A few years ago, it was my privilege to be present, for many days, in a great assembly at London, where representatives not only from Great Britain and Ireland and from the United States, but from Germany, from France, from Holland, from Switzerland, from Scandinavian countries, from the Protestantism of Italy, and from I know not how many other countries, were reporting to each other concerning the signs of the times, and deliberating on

plans of more extended coöperation, and praying together for the universal coming of the kingdom of God. That great assembly was itself a "sign of the times"—an effective manifestation not only of the progress which spiritual Christianity, as distinguished both from formalism and from unbelieving rationalism, is making in the world, but also of the vital unity and free coöperation which are bringing into conscious followship the growing multitude of believers in whose conception and experience the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." Forty years ago such an assembly could not have been; and yet, so great is the change, that assembly, though the first of its kind, was only first in a series.

While these changes have been in progress, breaking down so many of the barriers between nations, and bringing evangelical Christians of all names and languages and nations nearer to each other in thought and sympathy, and in coöperation, the principle of religious liberty has been gradually working itself into the public opinion of the civilized world, and into the laws and government of various nations. Forty years ago, in England itself, conscientious dissenters from the established state-religion, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, were subjected not indeed to positive persecution on account of their religion, but to many civil disabilities which are now almost forgotten. What progress freedom to worship God—freedom to read the Bible—freedom to preach the Gospel—has made, within these forty years, in France and other European countries, not excepting Italy, nay, in realms beyond the bounds of Christendom, I need not now describe. The change, in this respect, demonstrates that the nations are already at the threshold, as it were, of a new era, when truth shall everywhere be free in the conflict with error, and throughout the world the emancipating and renewing word of God shall run without hindrance.

Let us, then, not forget what it is which gives the chief distinction to this nineteenth century,—namely, the great movement for the propagation of the Gospel through the world. We who are growing old have seen great things in our day. Looking back over these forty years, with thoughtful view, and recollect-

ing how much of all my mortal life has been measured out to me, I cannot but thank God that I have lived in an age so full of zeal and enterprise in the work of preaching the Gospel to every creature. The modern era of evangelical missions to heathen nations may be marked as beginning near the close of the last century, when the religious awakenings of that century—the standard which the Spirit of the Lord set up against the unbelief and atheism that were coming in like a flood—had prepared a people for the work. Forty years ago, the chief evangelizing institutions through which the missionary zeal of Great Britain and America is now putting itself forth in all directions,—the great Bible and Missionary societies,—were already established; but the work was only begun. Much had been accomplished of preliminary labor; the field had been widely explored, languages had been mastered, missions had been commenced in many heathen lands, translations of the Bible had been made with various degrees of accuracy, wisdom had been acquired by experience; and there had been just enough of success to forbid discouragement. But what progress have we seen within these forty years! What do we see to-day? The isles are receiving God's law. Africa, on the eastern coast and on the western, is brightening with the light of the sun of righteousness. The hoary idolatries of India are losing their power; and converts to Christ in that land of immemorial darkness, are numbered by tens of thousands. In Turkey and Syria, God's blessing upon Protestant missions has achieved freedom for the Gospel; and, not only there but in Persia, the Gospel is demonstrating its power to make all things new. In China, missionaries from both sides of the Atlantic are working together, and, in the churches they have gathered and the steady progress of the truth, they see that their long labor is not in vain in the Lord. The darkness of the entire world of heathenism is dotted over with radiant points of Christian influence; and the free contributions of Christ's disciples in all lands, and of all names, are poured forth in a volume ever swelling with the progress of the years, and are accompanied with prayers and aspirations which give assurance of ever growing success. Let the work go forward

at the same rate of progress and development through another period of forty years; and then—in the fifth year of the twentieth century—how changed will be the aspect of this long benighted world! In all probability, there will even then be vast tracts of heathenism; wickedness may still be bold and blasphemous in Christian lands; the saints of God may still be crying to him: "O, Lord, how long?"—but the evangelization of the world, the work which the world's Redeemer has laid upon his Church, will be far in advance of where it now is. Some of you (we know not who they are) will see that day; but the great majority of us, before the beginning of that twentieth century, will have ceased to have any share

"In all that's done
"Beneath the circuit of the sun;"

and I might now count off name after name of those who will surely be in that majority.

I am sure to be in that majority, for "I know that shortly," at the latest, "I must put off this my tabernacle." But I charge you whom I shall leave behind me, to be faithful and constant in this work of spreading through the world the knowledge and kingdom of Christ. So long as "Thy kingdom come" is on your lips, let it never be an empty phrase; let it never be anything less than the breathing of faith and earnest hope, and the consecration of your free offerings and your personal service as "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God"—fellow-workers with those who have rested from their labors, and fellow-workers with those who shall come after you. So shall you share in the triumphal joy, when heaven shall shout to earth, and earth respond to heaven: "THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD."

My dear friends, of this Church and Ecclesiastical Society, I have now a few words more to say, of deep interest to myself and to you.

I am the oldest pastor in Connecticut, who has not, partly or wholly, withdrawn from his work.

The last ten years in a pastorate of half a century are

necessarily years of diminished vigor and of diminishing success in the work of the ministry.

I am old enough, now, to ask for relief; and at the same time I am not too old to receive it without feeling that I am slighted by the offer of it.

Not for my own sake merely, but rather for your sake and your children's sake, I ask you now to relieve me while I am willing to be relieved. All that concerns the mode or extent of the relief, I would refer to your kindness and discretion. On that point I have only to say: Give me either a colleague, or (if such be your judgment) a successor. I do not ask for an associate, one who shall help me and for whom I must be in some sort responsible. I ask rather for one who shall take charge of the flock, and be responsible for it, and whom I may help only as he may ask for assistance in the first few years of his work.

I am able to work, and may be able, perhaps, for ten years more. While I am still at your service in the work which I have so long performed among you, I trust I can find other work to do which will contribute to my support. I do not ask to become a burthen on you. I am willing to work while it is day. I only remember, and for your sake I remind you, that to me the day is far spent, and the night is coming when no man can work; and so I leave the matter in your hands.

"The Lord bless you and keep you: the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace."

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS.

At the Annual Meeting of the First Ecclesiastical Society, held January 10th, 1866:

Voted, That a special committee of seven be appointed to take into consideration the suggestions made by the Pastor in his Anniversary Sermon preached in March last.

Whereupon the following persons were appointed such committee:—Edward E. Salisbury, E. C. Scranton, H. C. Kingsley, A. C. Twining, Henry Trowbridge, Eli Whitney, Willis Bristol.

At an adjourned meeting of the Society, held February 5th, 1866:

The committee appointed at the meeting of the Society held January 10th, 1866, to take into consideration the suggestions made by the Pastor in his Anniversary Sermon preached in March last, presented the following report:

"The committee appointed, by the First Ecclesiastical Society, to take into consideration the communication made to the Church and Society, in the month of March last, by the Pastor, with respect to his pastoral relations, respectfully report—

"That three topics, in particular, seemed to them to require to be considered, namely: first, the question of acquiescing or not in the wish expressed by the Pastor, in that communication, to be relieved of the responsibilities of his pastoral relations; secondly, in case that question should be decided affirmatively, whether or not the particular mode of proceeding, with a view to the relief of the Pastor, suggested in that communication, should be adopted; and thirdly, in the event of the retirement of the Pastor from the duties of his office, what provision should be made for him by the Society, as an expression of their respect and affection: and that, accordingly, after much conference and discussion, the com-

mittee have agreed, unanimously, to recommend to the Society, for its adoption, the following resolutions:

"*First.* That, appreciating the distinguished abilities of our Pastor, and seeing no symptoms of decline of power, which should lead him to wish for relief, we nevertheless deem it proper and expedient that his desire to be relieved of all charge and responsibility in the pastoral relation, as expressed by him, in his communication to the Church and Society of last March, (of which some minutes by the Pastor are appended,) and repeated to our committee, be complied with as soon as suitable provisions for that end shall have been made.

"*Second.* As regards the method of proceeding in this matter, that, in our opinion, for the interests of the Church and Society, and for preserving that entire harmony of feeling which now exists between our respected Pastor and ourselves, a successor in the pastoral office over this Church and Society, in case of a vacancy, is preferable to any sort of colleague; and yet that, while we would thus remove from the Pastor all weight of responsibility for our future welfare, we shall desire and hope to be aided, in our new relations, by his kind counsel and judgment.

"*Third.* That, in consideration of our Pastor's long continued and faithful labors among us, and his eminently useful ministry, not only in immediate connection with ourselves, but also in wider relations, as well to the community in which we live, as to our State and country; and with a view to the expression of our affectionate respect, and of our solicitude that his later years should not be burthened with the necessity of work for which he may feel his strength inadequate, a committee be appointed to devise some suitable provision for our Pastor's remaining years, after the termination of his ministry among us.

[Signed by the members of the Committee.]

"*New Haven, January,* 1866."

Note.—The appended "minutes," being rendered unnecessary by the printing of the whole discourse, as above, are here omitted.

The report of the committee was accepted; the resolutions reported by them were taken up separately, and passed as reported by the committee, with the exception of the third, which was amended by inserting, after the word "country," the words "and to the Church at large," and, as amended, passed.

The committee contemplated by the third resolution was then appointed, consisting of E. E. Salisbury, E. C. Scranton, H. C. Kingsley, A. C. Twining, H. Trowbridge, E. Whitney and W. Bristol.

At an adjourned meeting of the Society held March 5th, 1866:

The committee appointed at the last meeting to devise some suitable provision for the Pastor, after the termination of his ministry, made report that, having given the subject due consideration, they recommended the passage of the following resolutions:

"*First.* That, in the event of Rev. Dr. Bacon's resignation of the pastoral office over the First Church and Society in New Haven, agreeably to the wish for relief from all pastoral duties and responsibilities expressed by him in his communication to the Church and Society of last March, and to the action of this Society thereupon, at an adjourned meeting held on the 5th day of February, 1866, this Society will continue to pay to him, after said resignation shall have been tendered and accepted, the sum of one thousand dollars, annually, so long as he shall live, from its accruing income.

"*Second.* That this Society will proceed to raise by subscription a fund of ten thousand dollars, at least, as a further provision for Rev. Dr. Bacon, in the event of his resignation of the pastoral office, and the acceptance thereof by the Church and Society: the income of said fund to be paid to him, annually, during his life, after such resignation and acceptance, and the principal to be distributed, at his death, among members of his family surviving him, in the manner and proportions which may be specified in his last will and testament; and that the said fund, so long as it shall remain undistributed as aforesaid, shall be under the care of the Managers of the Ministerial Fund of this Society, for the time being; and that, in the opinion of this Society, the pastoral office should not be resigned by Rev. Dr. Bacon until after said fund shall have been raised.

"*Third.* That a committee be appointed to receive subscriptions to the fund proposed in the next preceding resolution."

The report of the committee was accepted, and the resolutions passed.

The following persons were then appointed the committee con-

templated by the third of said resolutions, viz. A. C. Twining, H. Trowbridge, E. Whitney and C. S. Lyman.

At a special meeting of the Society held August 20th, 1866:

The committee appointed at the last meeting made report, that they had attended to the duty assigned to them, and that the amount subscribed had been raised to ten thousand one hundred and thirty-three dollars, with a prospect of further increase.

The report of the committee was accepted.

The following communication from the Pastor was received and read:

"*To the First Ecclesiastical Society in New Haven:*

"Brethren and Friends:

"The unexpected but characteristic liberality with which you have met my request to be relieved, either partly or entirely, from the labors of the pastoral office, before increasing infirmity shall make me unwilling to be so relieved, requires the most grateful acknowledgment on my part. Your kindness permits me to escape from the painful dread of seeing the prosperity of this ancient Church declining in the decline which must soon come upon me.

"I might find many reasons for postponing my resignation of the responsibilities which I have sustained so long; but I am convinced that your interests as a religious Society will be promoted by the introduction of another Pastor in my place, without any further delay. I see no probability that any measures will be taken in that direction while I continue to act as your Pastor.

"At the same time, I find myself invited to a work which I neither expected nor desired, but in which, being associated with colleagues in the prime and vigor of life, I may hope to serve for a while, and in which my experience as a minister of the gospel may be made useful to students for the ministry.

"Therefore, in conformity with your votes, at your adjourned meeting held on the 8th of February, 1866, I hereby resign the pastoral office in the First Church and Society in New Haven, from and after the second Sabbath in September next, which will complete forty-one years and a half since my installation. I

accept with hearty gratitude the provision you have made for me, according to your votes passed on the 5th day of March last.

"'Commending you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified,' I am with grateful affection, and with unceasing prayer for you all,

"Your friend and servant in Christ,

"LEONARD BACON.

"*New Haven, 6th August*, 1866."

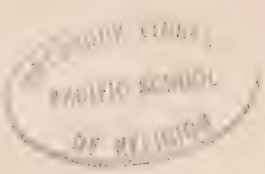
On motion, the resignation was unanimously accepted, and the foregoing communication ordered to be placed on file.

Voted, That this Society ratify the proceedings of the committee in obtaining the subscription for the benefit of Dr. Bacon, and accept said subscription, and will appropriate the same according to the terms of subscription.

At a meeting of the First Church in New Haven, held by appointment of the Senior Deacon, with the advice of a majority of the Deacons, on the 26th of August, 1866, immediately after morning-service, a communication having been made relating to, and explaining, the mutual action of the Ecclesiastical Society and their Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Bacon, touching the pastorship—it was

Resolved, That Deacon HENRY WHITE and HENRY TROWBRIDGE, Esq., are hereby appointed, on the part of this Church, to communicate to their Pastor, the Rev. LEONARD BACON, the deep feeling with which they have received information of his resignation of the pastoral office; also the acquiescence of this Church in the transactions between the Pastor and the Ecclesiastical Society, and in the issue of the same, although not of our seeking or desiring; and our request that, after the pastoral office shall have become vacant, as now appointed, the Pastor, mutually with ourselves, will continue in prayer that the Head of the Church will, in due time, provide for this Church an able and faithful minister of his own choosing.

The above was approved and passed, by vote, without dissent.



DISCOURSE IV.

THE PASTOR RETIRING FROM HIS OFFICIAL WORK.

PREACHED SEPTEMBER 9, 1866.

Acts xx. 32.—And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Few things in the history of Paul the Apostle are more characteristic of the man, or of the gospel which he preached, than this discourse of his to the officers of the Ephesian Church, when they had come down, at his invitation, to meet him at Miletus, and there to part with him. The discourse, in all that he says to them about their official work and responsibility, in all that he says about himself, and in all that he says about approaching conflicts with evil, is a lesson to churches and ministers through all time.

Reading this discourse, we can hardly fail to observe how freely and naturally he speaks of himself, in the first person, and of his ministry. He was speaking to friends—to old and tried friends—in circumstances which required him to speak in that way. To speak otherwise, on that occasion, would have

been affectation, and he would have failed to say the fit and timely words, had he been embarrassed by the fear of exposing himself to the imputation of egotism. If I speak of myself this afternoon, let the occasion be my apology.

An official ministry of forty-one years and a half, in this ancient Church, is now to be ended. On the first Lord's-day in the next month, forty-two years will have been completed since the first occasion on which I led the worship of God in this house, and attempted to dispense the word of life. It would be injustice to your feelings and my own, if I should retire from my official work among you without some serious and affectionate words appropriate to the occasion. For this purpose no better arrangement of topics occurs to me than that which the Apostle followed in his address to the Ephesian elders.

I. He appeals to their knowledge of himself. "Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." So I may say, you know the course and character of my ministry among you from its beginning. But to how few of you can I say this literally and personally! Where are the men and women that knew the beginning of my service here? I look along this aisle—and that—and that; and how few are there to whom, as individuals, I can say: You personally know, from the first day that I stood here to preach the gospel, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons! Some such there are who are older than myself, and others who have grown old with me; and I thank God that every one of them is my dear friend to-day, esteeming me very highly in love—not surely for my own sake, as if I deserved it, but for my work's sake. The great majority of those who are now adults in the parish, were children, or were not yet born, when I began the work which I resign to-day. Yet I may say to them, as well as to the few who are of my own age, or older—to the congregation as a whole I may say—to all the churches of Christ in this city I may say—to the entire community of those around us who take any interest in the ministry of the gospel, I may say: Ye know after what manner I have been among you at all times.

It is a serious thought to a minister of the gospel, and espe-

cially to the pastor of a church, that so many people know him, and know after what manner he is doing his work, or has done it. His work is essentially public—he is always under inspection and criticism. Others may seek retirement, and love to dwell in the shade; but he has no privilege of that sort, whatever his inclination may be. His gifts, his merits, and not these only, but his faults, his mistakes, his infirmities, his professional habits, his personal peculiarities, his infelicities of manner or deportment, belong in some degree to the public. Everybody in the parish knows all about him; and what the whole parish knows, everybody else knows. Everybody has a right—more or less clearly recognized—to talk about him, and to give an opinion for or against him, whatever he does, or whatever he neglects or refuses to do. All this is an inevitable incident of his position. He must bear this yoke in his youth; and if he lives long enough he must bear it till he is old. He cannot look upon his congregated hearers—he cannot meet his neighbors in any relation—without the thought: They all know after what manner I am with them at all seasons:—if I am faithful, the ineffaceable record of my fidelity is in their consciences; if I am unfaithful, they are witnesses against me.

II. The Apostle, in thus appealing to their personal memory, reminds them more distinctly of what he had done in that Church, and of what he had experienced there. "Ye know after what manner I have been with you—serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which came upon me by the plottings of the Jews—how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying, both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." I dare not say so much as this. Yet, appealing to you who know after what manner I have been with you, I may say that, if I know myself, I have been endeavoring, through all the days of this ministry, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Sure I am that, if I have served Christ at all, I have served him with a constant sense of imperfection and unfitness for so arduous a work. I have loved the work of preach-

ing the gospel and showing to men the way of salvation: I love it still; I hope to die in it; but O, how far have I come short of setting forth, as it always seemed to me I might do, and ought to do, the reasonableness, the attractiveness, the beauty, the glory of that gospel! As for the "humility of mind" which the Apostle speaks of, I think I know what it is, not only in that consciousness of moral imperfection in the sight of God which attends all the progress of the Christian life, but also in the consciousness of personal incompetence to so great a work. I love to preach, but if anybody has at any time been dissatisfied with my preaching, and has felt that it did not approach the divine greatness of the theme, let him be assured that I have been more dissatisfied than he. At the same time I may say: You know how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you—no point of Christian truth or duty that has seemed to be needful, but have announced to you, publicly, and from house to house—in the great congregation, and in the more private teaching and application of the word—testifying to all alike, year after year, in times of revived religious feeling, and in times of comparative declension, the one comprehensive doctrine of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This, as every hearer knows, has been, in its diversified bearings and relations—in the arguments by which it is enforced, the views of God and man, of time and eternity, of sin and salvation, by which it is illustrated, and the applications in which it bears on all the details of human duty—this has been the burthen of my ministry: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is here—repent, and turn to God—repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance—repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, putting full confidence in his readiness and power to save you, and following him whithersoever his word and Spirit lead you.

One phrase in the Apostle's speech refers to what he had experienced at Ephesus. He speaks of his "tears," and of the opposition—the "temptations" or persecutions—which he had encountered from the machinations of the unbelieving Jews. His allusion in the word "tears" may be to some personal sorrow which was of course well known to his hearers on that oc-

casion, but of which no record has come to us. Perhaps the allusion is only to the anxiety and the depression of feeling with which he had pursued his work, watching for souls, and grieved to see men dying in their sins. But when he speaks of what befel him by the plotting of adversaries, we know what he means. We have, in the foregoing chapter, a definite account of the opposition which was made to him in Ephesus on the ground that his preaching interfered with commercial and public interests: and he implies that when, as he expresses it in one of his epistles, he "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus," unbelieving Jews, enemies of Christ crucified, were at the bottom of the mischief, as we know they were at Iconium and Lystra, and at other places. Now I have no thought of comparing myself with the Apostle in this respect. My life among you has not been without its share in the sorrows incident to our condition in a dying world; but why should I speak of such sorrows to-day? Let me rather say that, through your kindness, and by the favoring providence of God, my life among you has been eminently a happy life. My home, though often darkened by sickness and death, has been, and is, a happy home. Yet when I think of this long ministry, and of how many there have been, and are, to whom, in the name of a redeeming God, I have offered a great and free salvation, but of whom it would be presumptuous to say that the gospel which they have heard here will not bear witness against them to their condemnation — when I remember what thoughts, what hopes, what disappointments, I have had concerning them — when I remember what prayers, in the church and in retirement, have accompanied the invitations, the persuasions, and the warnings which I have addressed to them from this place, and in which I have been Christ's messenger to their souls — I can enter into the feeling which the Apostle uttered when he spoke of "serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears."

Something, too, I have known of that opposition which the free and earnest application of God's word to the sins of men rarely fails to excite. Of course I have never had any such experience as Paul had at Ephesus and elsewhere—such things

are not to be expected here. Nor have I ever encountered any hostility on the part of this Church, or of the Ecclesiastical Society. If here and there one has been unable to accept the views which have here been exhibited from the word of God, and applied to live questions of duty, such persons have never formed a party in opposition to the Pastor. Sometimes such an one has been generously willing to recognize the fact that I must be governed by my own convictions, and sometimes another has quietly withdrawn to seek elsewhere a ministry better suited to the habit of his mind. But, after all, I have never had occasion to take alarm from that saying of Christ: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." The open enemies of Christian truth and holiness, and those who have had aims or interests adverse to the moral welfare of society, have never been my friends. It is a small thing to have been the song of the drunkard, and the jest of the ribald scoffer. Men who get gain by making drunkards, and whose industry helps to increase the aggregate of vice and crime in the community, filling the poor-house and the jail with the victims of their trade, have hated me and cursed me. Men who find their fellow-man "guilty of a skin not colored like their own," and who "for such a rightful cause" desire to tread him down—men whose interests in trade, or whose associations and aspirations in political parties, were so involved in the wicked institution of slavery that they must needs pay homage to that hideous idol, and cry in its behalf, from time to time, as Demetrius and his mob cried: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"—and men who were disloyal or half loyal to their country when rebellion was striking at its life—have charged me with not preaching the gospel, and have cast out my name as evil. But their opposition has never done me personally any harm, (such men's opinions, as to what the gospel is, are of little consequence,) and, in this closing hour of my service as your Pastor, I am thankful to remember that those who want an antinomian gospel, with no denunciation of wickedness, with no light for the conscience, and with no power to quicken the moral sense, have never spoken well of me. Opposition from such sources is

a testimony that I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God.

The Apostle could say, in all humility of mind, and without professing that he had never, in any respect, come short of his duty to Christ: "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." While I know my infirmity, and confess before God, and before you all, that I have fallen very far short of what I ought to have been as a minister of Christ in such a place as this, you are my witnesses this day that, so far as the scope and range of my preaching of God's word is concerned, I have kept back nothing that was profitable, and have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God, and that, in that view, I am free from the blood of all men.

III. Another topic in Paul's discourse at Miletus is even more personal to himself. He speaks of his own future, and of the uncertainties which were before him. "I am going," he says, "to Jerusalem, carried along like a prisoner—bound in the spirit—bound in conscience—not knowing the things that shall befall me there." There were many things distinctly in prospect that might have discouraged him; but his great desire was that he "might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

In regard to my own future, I have little to say. I am not departing from you. Here, where I have lived so many years, I expect to pass the brief remainder of my life. How it is that my official ministry in this dear congregation has come to its conclusion, I can hardly explain to myself otherwise than by saying that God has so ordered it. When I proposed to you, a year and a half ago, to relieve me of my pastoral care and labor, entirely, or in part, at your discretion, I had no plan or prospect for the future, other than that perhaps I might find time in the evening of life to perform, for the Churches of New England, a service to which I had been urged by friends and by brethren in the ministry, but which I felt I should not perform with the undivided care of this congregation resting on me:

and that, while performing that service, I might also be doing some good by giving instruction to theological students concerning the New England church-polity and church-history. My thought was that I might go on with my pastoral charge for another year or two, and then perhaps for yet another, till you should find a successor for me. But your singular kindness and generosity in meeting, and more than meeting, my wishes, and in making provision for me and those dependent on me in my declining years, became a significant intimation to me—an intimation, not of your wish, but of your generous willingness, that I should lay down my office. And then—just as the arrangement was complete which you have made for me—a most unexpected invitation to a different kind of work was laid before me. In other circumstances, I should not have listened to such an invitation. There is no promotion in going from this pulpit to a theological chair—as pulpits and professorships are to-day. The transfer might have been preferment forty years ago; but times are changed. For many years I have been devoutly thankful that I was not a professor of theology; and never have I desired a position so exposed to the censures of those good men who feel that their vocation is to be jealous for their traditional orthodoxy. But, notwithstanding my reluctance, the circumstances in which I found myself, when the invitation came, seemed like a clear revelation of my duty. I go "bound in the spirit"—reluctantly—under a sort of necessity laid upon me in God's providence—not knowing how I may succeed in my new work. It is a work in which my term of service, at the longest, must be very short, and for which I can now make no preparation other than that which my more than forty years of service and experience in preaching have given me. I may fail in it. I have not dared to commit myself to it but for a single year. But if, by the blessing of God, I succeed in it, I shall leave a great legacy of good behind me, having finished my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

IV. The Apostle speaks anxiously, and in words of warning, as to the future that was before the Church at Ephesus. Charg-

ing the elders or bishops, who were his hearers, that they should take heed to themselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, he says: "I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves will men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." He foresaw dangers coming upon that church from without, and dangers arising within, but he could say in confident hope: "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Shall I say anything to you about your future? I remember the past. The history of this Church, for two hundred and thirty years, testifies of God's care and favor. He brought hither a vine as out of Egypt. He cast out the heathen, and planted it. He prepared room before it, and caused it to take deep root. "She hath sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river!" Will he not behold and visit this vine and the vineyard which his right hand hath planted? Will he who has guarded this Church, and upheld it through so many ages, and so many changes, forsake it now? I call to mind the changes of these last forty years. What hath God wrought! Think, brethren, what has been going on in this world since you and I have been in this relation to each other. No age of history, save only that in which Christ came and his gospel began to run its course of conquest, has been so full of marvelous changes as the age in which we have been living, and which is covered by the personal recollections of the old men among us. Think what revolutions of empire there have been—what changes in commerce and the intercourse of nations—what strides in the progress of civilization, of knowledge, and of the arts that minister to human power or human comfort. Think how marvelously these changes have been made subservient, on the whole, to the advancement of civil and religious liberty, to the more general diffusion of knowledge in all civilized nations, and to the spread of the gospel through the world. Such views are familiar to all intelligent persons, but it requires a

more thoughtful mind, observant of spiritual things, to realize what changes have been taking place within these forty years in the universal Church of Christ—especially how the religious thinking, and the religious activity, and the various manifestations of religious experience and spiritual life, in the entire extent of Protestant and Evangelical Christendom, have really advanced from the position of forty years ago. Other changes, of no less significance than those which crowd our memory, will mark the remainder of the waning century. The kingdom of Christ is advancing; and, as dependent on it or subsidiary to it, governments will rise and fall, old empires will pass away like exhalations, science will make new discoveries in all the realms of nature, commerce and art will give new power to industry, and the wealth of nations—especially of free and Christian nations like our own—will increase beyond all former calculation. Peril is always incident to progress, and, as I look to the immediate future, I foresee dangers to the churches—dangers in which this Church must share. I foresee danger from without, in the prevailing tendency of modern thought acting on the churches and their ministry through all the channels of literature, and coming in on all the vehicles of intellectual influence. The tendency of modern thought is to the denial of a personal God, and therefore to a scheme or body of opinions which is really atheism cloaking itself in words that seem to be religious. That is the danger from without—the danger of a pantheistic Anti-Christ, for even now there are many Anti-Christs—the danger of conceptions and principles, plausible but heathenish, creeping into the churches in the guise of a religious philosophy, like wolves in sheep's clothing. At the same time I foresee danger from within—nay, I see it actually present, and growing every day. The danger from within is in the growing wealth of the members of the churches, and in those habits of self-pleasing, and conformity to the world, which wealth engenders. O my Christian brethren in this Church, take heed to yourselves—take heed to the flock. Take heed in the choice of a Pastor. Take heed to place over you, in the ministry of the word, not one whose brilliant rhetoric shall attract the thoughtless without making them thoughtful, and who shall

pull down other congregations to build up this, but a man earnest to save souls, a man full of the Holy Spirit, and of that power which comes from communion with the mind of Christ, a man who will feed the flock of the Lord which He has purchased with his blood. Thus I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. Let your trust for your future be in that gospel which is the power of God to salvation, and in God who gave it. He is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified.

More than this the Apostle said to his hearers at Miletus. In order to secure them against the dangers which he foresaw, he commended to their attention the beneficent and self-denying character of the religion which he had taught them. Having referred to his own example, reminding them how far he stood above the suspicion of mercenary aims and views in the work which he had done among them, and with what self-denial he had served them in the gospel, by his personal industry contributing to the necessities of himself, and of those that were with him, he ended his discourse by saying: "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" The beneficent spirit of Christ living in his followers—self-denying activity and generosity in doing good—earnest and unwearying coöperation in the work of Christ—is the conservative power by which the Church, under the guardianship of Christ himself, must be held up, and built up, in all the times of temptation that come upon the earth. Those who are working for Christ, and with him, against the wretchedness, the ignorance, and the wickedness, of the world—consulting and praying together, and provoking one another in holy emulation to love and good works—are workers together with God, and, in the consciousness that he is with them, they know that their fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Religion is to them not a speculation nor a dream, but a life, and no plausibilities of pantheistic philosophy, in whatever form of literature or science, can turn them from their faith in a personal God, who discerns between good and evil, with infinite joy in the

one, and infinite abhorrence of the other. The temptations which come with increase of riches shall not prevail over them, for the discipline of work and self-denial in the service of Christ is ever training them to acknowledge that, as they are Christ's, so all that they can call their own is his, and cannot without sacrilege be used for their own self-indulgence and vain-glory. Brethren and friends, in this final hour of my official ministry among you, I charge you, as you would be safe from the temptations that in the future will beset you from without and from within, take heed to yourselves and to the flock, and let this Church become progressively earnest and large-hearted in the work of the Lord. Remember that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is a religion of personal beneficence, and of protest in spirit and life against all in this world that pollutes the soul. Be, not in profession only, but in all your activity and aspiration, followers of Christ as dear children—followers of him who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor—followers of the world's Redeemer, and workers together with him—working and giving as well as praying—working for God—working, through every good enterprise and institution, for the Church, for the suffering or the degraded, for neighbors and fellow-citizens, for posterity, for the country, for the world. So shall God, by the word of his grace, build you up, and give you an inheritance among the saints.

A few words will sufficiently explain the position in which I stand henceforth as related to those who have been the people of my pastoral charge. My relation to the Ecclesiastical Society will be simply that of a grateful pensioner. From this day the pulpit is no longer mine. I have no responsibility for it, and no control over it. My resignation having been accepted by the Society and consented to by the Church, I am simply a retired Pastor, not dismissed by a council, and commended to the churches for another settlement, but one who has served his time out, and been released from service. In this Church I am a brother—an elder brother, and, in the sense of that Apostolic precept, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church," I am still an elder. Till the time comes—which I pray may not be distant—when you will

have another Pastor, call for me, as freely as heretofore, when any is sick among you, and where the windows are darkened by death. Let no member of this congregation think that the tie between you and me is broken in that respect, or that it is weakened, so long as you are without another Pastor.

Is all this a dream?—or is it a waking reality? Is it indeed a fact that I am now laying down what has been my life-work? Of the less than sixty years this side of the dim and shadowy period into which my memory cannot distinctly penetrate, almost forty-two are identified with my work in this Church. All my plans in life—all my intellectual pursuits and enjoyments—my studies and my relaxations—my dearest affections —my domestic joys and sorrows—all my hopes this side of heaven; yes, and my hopes that reach into that brighter world —my prayers—my daily consciousness of infirmity and dependence—my conflicts with temptation—my confidence in Christ's grace and strength—my experiences of religious comfort, and aspirations after likeness to the Saviour—have been inseparably connected with that burthen, heavy but happy, which I now lay down before you and before God. You cannot think it strange that the laying down of such a burthen, so long incorporated with my life, seems to me almost like a dream.

Twice, since the beginning of this year, I have been called to preach at a pastor's funeral, and somehow it seems as if I were performing the same sort of service to-day. Among the pastors of the Congregational churches in this city, the two that were nearest to myself in age, and with whom I had been associated from the beginning of their ministry in their early youth, have died; and the pulpits that were theirs are vacant. This pulpit which has been mine is vacant, though I am yet alive. It is a singular coincidence of events, under the providence of God, that these three churches, the oldest of our order in New Haven—the three that have had pastorates continuing, respectively, into the twenty-eighth, the thirty-third, and the forty-second year—are now at once looking to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and waiting for pastors. One generation goeth and another generation cometh. The age to which

my life belongs is disappearing and passing into history, and another age, in which the most of you will survive me, is beginning. Brethren and friends, for your own sake, and your children's sake, and for the sake of all those interests which are involved in the purity and spiritual prosperity of these churches, let prayer be made continually that, in the new age which is opening, these churches, enriched with the ministry of godly pastors, able and faithful, may stand together, and do all their part in the work of training souls for heaven, and of filling the world with the knowledge and the glory of the Lord.

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